

# TALES FROM *the* WILD NEWSLETTER



## INSIDE:

THE GREAT PLATYPUS COMEBACK  
OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE  
HOW YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE GREAT BARRIER REEF  
SAY HELLO TO TARONGA'S NEWEST LITTLE BABIES

**TARONGA**   
CONSERVATION SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

*For the Wild*

# GIVING THEM BACK THEIR FUTURE



**I'm sure you were as heartbroken as we were to hear about the issues plaguing our little Aussie Platypus.**

They were the silent victims of last year's devastating bushfires and drought. These catastrophic weather events took their toll on the already vulnerable

Platypus which sadly saw them disappearing from our rivers, creeks and ponds at an alarming rate.

We reached out to you recently to let you know how our unique Platypus need protection and the tragic truth that at this rate they are set to decline by at least 50% over the next 50 years.

You heard about Taronga's vision to build a world-first Platypus refuge facility and how we urgently need your help to kick start these centres.

And your response was amazing, thank you! With your generous support we can now begin the work to give the Platypus a safe future.

Because of you we have been able to start the long road of making an extraordinary difference to these one of a kind animals. Your support has aided us in commencing the design on these world-first facilities and work on the important planning of the life-changing platypus environments within the centre.

I can't over-state how urgent and ground-

breaking these facilities will be for Platypus conservation and ensuring their future.

The facilities will be leading centres for Platypus research, and the first-ever facilities to breed Platypus for release into the wild. That means we'll be able to restore wild populations, which is absolutely incredible and a world-first endeavour.

It's very exciting, and some good news for native species conservation in Australia. We can't thank you enough for supporting this first of its kind, ground-breaking project, thank you!

**Because of your thoughtful support we can get this iconic Aussie species off the path to extinction.**

***"This is a quick note of heartfelt thanks. Platypus are on a trajectory towards extinction. The devastating droughts across the country have had a critical impact on this iconic mammal.***

*With the decline of Koalas ringing out as a warning bell of what can happen if we don't act with urgency, your generosity has provided this unique species with a lifeline.*

*The refuge habitats, breeding facilities and research centre we are working towards are the only of their kind in the world. With these developments we will take a significant step towards arresting the extinction of our beloved Platypus. We could not do this without your generosity and support – Thank you!"*

- Nick Boyle, Director of Welfare, Conservation & Science





Photo by Paul Fahy

# SHINING A LIGHT ON *the* ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Last Spring, we introduced you to **Dr Phoebe Meagher, a Taronga Wildlife Conservation Officer, who has witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of the illegal wildlife trade in Australia.**

She told us about distressed animals that have been bound-up in masking tape and shoved inside water bottles and socks so they can be posted out of Australia.

Heartbreakingly, she told us the iconic short-beaked

Echidna has become a growing target for wildlife traffickers. This unique species, that can only be found in three countries in the world – Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia (Papua), has become a victim to the trade and is being illegally taken from the wild and sadly passed off as captive-bred.

Back in September we reached out to you about this horrid practice and asked if you could help us in the fight against the illegal trade and

*“I would like to personally thank you for your generous contribution to help us combat illegal wildlife trade in Australia.*



*Your support has allowed us to purchase the Olympus Vanta XRF, a crucial piece of technology in the development of our new forensic tool.*

*It has allowed the Taronga forensics team to scan over 100 target species including freshwater turtles, Blue-tongue lizards and Shingleback lizards – the most heavily trafficked species out of Australia. Recent data suggests the illegal trade of reptiles out of Australia is increasing and approximately 90% of traded reptile species are captured from the wild, causing huge biodiversity losses.*

*Because of your generous support we are able to continue to scan rescued animals using the XRF and the data will help us determine where these animals have come from. From the reptiles and the Taronga Forensics Team. – Thank you!”*

- Phoebe, Wildlife Conservation Officer

your response was swift, thank you!

With your support we have been able to further develop the WildEnforce tool. It's the forensic tool that analyses keratin with a quick, non-invasive scan, telling custom officials if the animal has been captive-bred or illegally taken from the wild.

Your generous support has enabled us to continue with this game-changing project. We have been able to purchase crucial pieces of

technology which has in turn allowed the Taronga team to scan over 100 targeted species.

That's an amazing achievement that could not have been reached without you, our wonderful and supportive donors, thank you!

**You are an important part of the fight against the illegal wildlife trade. Your thoughtful support has made a world of difference for not only Australian wildlife but wildlife around the globe.**

# AN AUSSIE ICON

## How Zoo Parent adoptions are helping to save the adorable Koala

Koalas are one of Australia's most unique and precious animals and are a favourite part of the family here at Taronga.

Taronga is home to 22 Koalas. Their favourite activity is eating and sleeping and who can blame them! Koalas are expert sleepers and can spend up to 19 hours a day catching Zzz's. This is due to the processing of all the eucalyptus leaves they consume, of which they eat about a kilogram worth each day.

An Australia without the cute and cuddly looking Koala would be unimaginable. Sadly though, this is becoming a reality for Australia's beloved icon.

Koalas in the wild face a number of threats to their survival with habitat loss remaining their greatest threat. They are also facing disease, droughts



and heatwaves, climate change, predation by non-native species, and urban growth.

Estimates suggest Koalas are on a trajectory to extinction by 2050 – a situation made worse by recent bushfires.

The devastating bushfires of 2019/2020 destroyed huge areas of Koala habitat, and put enormous pressure on already declining populations. It is estimated 10,000 Koalas perished in the fires.

That's why, thanks to the incredible support of Zoo Parents, Taronga is prioritising the conservation of Koalas. Restoring their vital habitat and protecting bushland is critically important to their future.

Your thoughtful adoption today will help Taronga's long-term strategy of restoring Koala habitats, assist with health research to combat disease and help establish a breeding program to rebuild Koala populations.

If you are already a Zoo Parent to our amazing Koalas, thank you so much!

Your caring and compassionate adoption is helping to save the iconic Koala, ensuring they thrive for generations to come.

Visit [taronga.org.au/Zooparent](https://taronga.org.au/Zooparent) or scan the QR Code from your phone's camera to find our more. Your adoptive animal is waiting and you can help a species in need today!

This Mother's Day, spoil mum with an adorable **KOALA ADOPTION!**



Your gift will protect and nurture Koalas in the wild – just like mum has always looked after you.

Visit [taronga.org.au/Zooparent](https://taronga.org.au/Zooparent)



Scan here

# AS A WILDLIFE DEFENDER, YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING AMAZING FOR HER

**Taronga Wildlife Defenders are our group of supporters who choose to commit to a monthly regular gift to support our work to protect endangered and vulnerable species in Australia and around the globe.**

Your commitment to helping our most vulnerable and threatened species is truly inspirational and admirable – thank you.

One of those species is the critically endangered Black Rhino and sadly, it's not the only one. All five rhino species – Black, White, Sumatran, Javan and Greater One-Horned Rhinos – are facing growing threats to their survival.

They face dangers from habitat loss and poaching and have been so severely impacted, that today

there are fewer than 80 Sumatran Rhinos left in the wild. The sad reality is that Rhinos are facing extinction.

Taronga supports rhino conservation efforts throughout Africa and Asia. We are doing everything we can to save them from this fate, but we can't do this alone.

As a Taronga Wildlife Defender, you play a vital role in protecting these precious species. Your regular gifts fund habitat protection, support anti-poaching units, and aid rhino health programs.

In countries such as Zimbabwe, Wildlife Defenders are supporting programs which have virtually eliminated poaching, and helped the Black Rhino population turn their population decline around. And in Indonesia, not a single



Sumatran Rhino has been poached from the Way Kambas National Park in more than 6 years, and no Javan Rhino poached in 11 years. Amazing!

These fantastic results could not have been achieved without the support of our Taronga Wildlife Defenders. Your support, particularly this last year when it was so challenging during the pandemic, is especially gratefully received. Thank you for helping to protect these precious rhino populations. Because of you rhinos stand a chance of survival.

At Taronga, we are delighted that 15 Black Rhino and 17 White Rhino calves have been

born at the Zoo since these programs began, with a White Rhino named Meeka – born in August 2019. Through dedicated supporters, rhino conservation has seen some spectacular successes over the years.

But with the majority of rhino species remaining critically endangered, and numbers continuing to fall, we need you now more than ever.

As a Taronga Wildlife Defender, you have played a critical role in the global fight to save precious rhino species from extinction. Thank you!

**Interested in finding out how you can become a Taronga Wildlife Defender? Simply go to [taronga.org.au/wildlife-defender](https://taronga.org.au/wildlife-defender) or scan the QR code from your phone's camera to find out more.**

## IT'S A GIRL!!

We are happy to announce the very special birth of a critically endangered Black Rhino calf at Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo.

She was born in the early hours of Wednesday 24th February 2021 to mum Bakhita. This amazing calf is not only carrying the legacy of her late father Kwanzaa who sadly passed away in 2020, but also gives hope to her species for generations to come.



Scan here

# REEF RECOVERY

**Did you know Taronga is a global leader in cryopreservation technology and operates two secure CryoDiversity Banks – one at each of its zoos – which house specimens of corals and a range of other fauna species?**

In fact, Taronga holds the largest bank of frozen coral sperm cells anywhere in the world.

If that sounds peculiar to you, we do this so we can learn more about coral biology and ensure we have genetically diverse coral cells for use in the repair and preservation of the Great Barrier Reef.

We can also fill crucial knowledge gaps including what makes a coral more resilient to climate change and optimal timings and conditions to transplant coral spawned from thawed sperm back into the reef.

Once a year since 2011, timed to the full moon, Taronga scientists head to the Great Barrier Reef for the mass coral spawning event to collect coral reproductive cells. Working with our partners, we bank as much as possible, with each trip targeting a variety of resilient hard-coral species from different parts of the reef.



Despite considerable restrictions associated with COVID-19, Taronga's biologists were granted special entry into Queensland in December 2020 – an acknowledgement of the important priority of the conservation work saving the unique reef before it's too late.

**During six spawning nights the team banked:**

- samples from 45 individual colonies of 9 different species;
- of those, 22 colonies from 3 species were from a previously unsampled region of the northern Great Barrier Reef which had survived the bleaching events in the summers of 2016 and 2017;

- samples from 3 additional species were added to the bank.

The Taronga CryoDiversity Bank now includes cells from 29 species of coral, representing the northern, central and southern regions of the reef, frozen and stored with cryopreservation technologies.

Visit [taronga.org.au/reefrecovery](https://taronga.org.au/reefrecovery) or scan the QR Code from your phone's camera to find our more.



Scan here

# THE FUTURE *of* FROGS

**It is never too early to start your philanthropy journey.**

Fifteen-year-old Jacob has a keen interest in some of the less cute and fluffy, but just as vitally important native

species. Jacob has been fascinated by reptiles and amphibians for many years and is the proud owner of a number of slithering pets.

After learning about the many critically endangered Australian native species, Jacob decided he wanted to find a way to safeguard their survival in the wild for future generations.

Guided by the philanthropic spirit of his parents, Jacob reached out to Taronga

to understand the difference he could make through a donation.

After learning about Taronga's ambition to breed the previously believed extinct, now critically endangered Yellow-Spotted Bell Frog, he is generously contributing to support the 'breed for release' program for the species for the next three years.

The program will enable a brighter future for the frogs and the healthy ecology of their habitat.



**Jacob recently joined Taronga's Bridgit Allingham and Herpetofauna Supervisor Michael McFadden at the unveiling of his name plaque in the Taronga Institute of Science & Learning in recognition of his generous support.**



## SUPPORTING *the* NEXT GENERATION *of* CONSERVATIONISTS

**As previous Chairman of the Taronga Conservation Society Australia (1996-2015), Mr Len Bleasel AM oversaw huge transformations within the organisation – an inspiring and dedicated leader, he recognised the importance of investing in people.**

In 2016 Mr Bleasel continued his generous

support of Taronga's people by funding a scholarship program, providing Taronga employees with opportunities to study, learn and gain experiences.

Recently, Mr Bleasel has also committed to funding a new Leadership Program to support the next generation of conservationists.

The Bleasel Leadership Program is an 18-month program providing Taronga employees with the opportunity to complete a Diploma of Leadership & Management at the University of Technology Sydney. This is the first time a program of this kind has been offered at Taronga. The first scholarship recipients

commence the program in March 2021.

We are delighted that Mr Len Bleasel is leading the way in philanthropy, there are many ways to get involved and support the work of Taronga.

**If you would like to learn more about how to support Taronga's work please contact [supporter@taronga.org.au](mailto:supporter@taronga.org.au)**

***"Taronga is demonstrating a commitment to help shape the future for zoo-based conservation organisations for many years to come.***

*Whilst our teams are often recognised as technical experts, the opportunity to develop our leadership and management skill-set through a formally recognised university course is an exceptional opportunity to more effectively deliver conservation and welfare initiatives into the future. Thank you!"*

– Claire Ford, Manager, Population Development & Welfare



# MEET ONE OF TARONGA'S RECENT FUNDRAISING SUPERSTARS - LACHLAN!

**Lachlan is passionate about all wildlife, he especially LOVES marine turtles!**

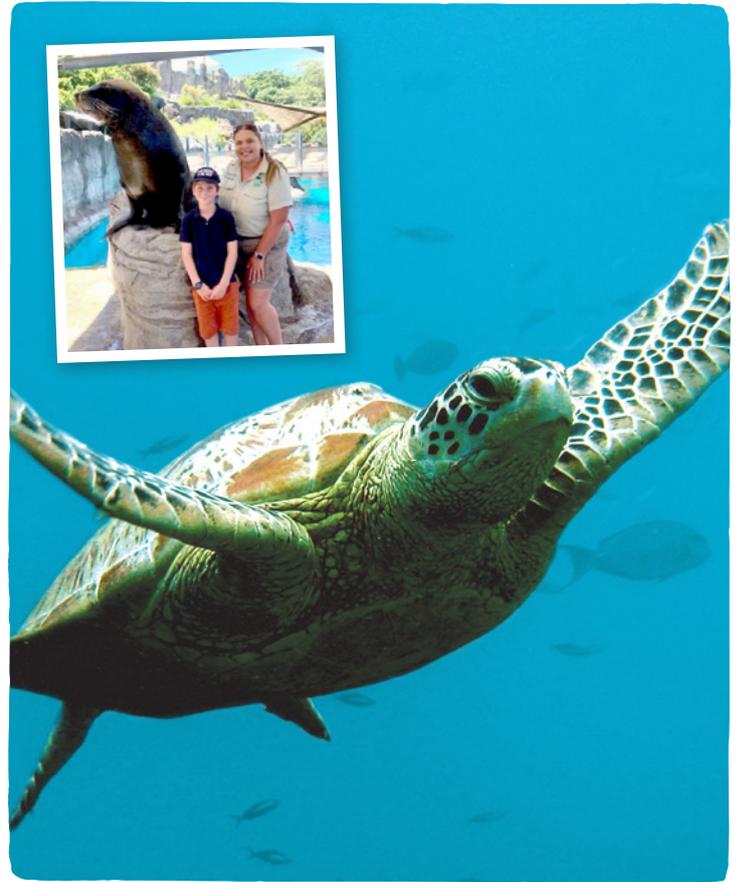
When Lachlan learnt that Taronga's Wildlife Hospital in Sydney frequently treats critically injured Marine Turtles that have been washed up on beaches or found floating in the ocean unable to dive, he was determined to help give these majestic creatures a second chance at life.

As a very creative and confident eight-year-old he used his French knitting skills to design

his own Christmas tree decorations which he sold to family and friends to raise funds for Taronga to ensure a safe future for Marine Turtles.

Through his inspiring online donation page Lachlan encouraged his friends and family to donate to the turtles. **Lachlan raised over \$1,000!**

Lachlan's support will help Taronga continue it's vital work in Marine Turtle conservation; particularly through our rescue, rehabilitation and release programs.



## EVERY CONTRIBUTION HELPS TO ENSURE A SAFE FUTURE FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

**Did you know that you can show your support for Taronga's animal conservation programs by becoming a member of Team Taronga?**

Thanks to the efforts of fundraisers, Taronga can breed threatened species, carry on scientific

research and support vital animal conservation programs locally and across the globe.

Whether you are an individual, group, business, school or community group wanting to make a difference, there are many ways to get involved to

show your support of Taronga's conservation programs, and we'll ensure you have a great time while you do it!

We have a range of resources and unique incentives to help you meet your goals. Here are some of the top ideas for our community of fundraisers:

- Give in celebration! Ask your friends to donate to your special occasion in lieu of receiving gifts
- Host a physical or virtual event
- Complete a fun run or sporting challenge

- Hold a cake stall
- Fundraise in memory of a loved one
- Choose your own new and exciting idea!!

**Register your interest at [taronga.org.au/donate/fundraising](https://taronga.org.au/donate/fundraising) or scan the QR Code, and we'll support you every step of the way to ensure your fundraiser is a success.**



Scan here



# CHANGES *for* OUR FUTURE

At Taronga we are extremely proud and excited to announce that we have partnered with Red Energy, an Australian energy retailer, owned by Snowy Hydro, a leader in renewable energy.

As we are committed to reducing the impact of our zoos operations

and are always working sustainability objectives into everything we do, Red Energy is the perfect fit for us!

Our long time running and popular **Seals for the Wild** show is now amazingly powered by Red Energy, aiding us in working towards our ongoing sustainability goals.

At Taronga we believe in the power of choice when it comes to caring for and protecting wildlife and wild places.

Whether it's reducing your plastic footprint, choosing MSC when purchasing seafood or supporting renewable energy – you can be a champion for the wild.

This April, we will be celebrating the new

partnership with Red Energy's Zoo Month.

So splash out and bring your nearest and dearest along to see our flippers friends and have a seal-iously good time!

## Seals for the Wild

Powered by **red** energy 

**We recently celebrated the Maritime Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainable seafood week.**

Taronga is committed to sustainability for the protection of our oceans which we call "Fish for Good".

You too can help by simply choosing MSC labelled seafood next time you are at the shops – just look for the MSC blue tick!



Taronga Keeper trains with our seals  
Photo by Jonathan Dear



# WELCOME, OUR FRIENDS *of the* FUTURE



Cameron Kerr welcoming our Friends of the Future

## CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST WITH *the* SEALS

Aside from the feel-good factor that comes from knowing your legacy will live on, caring for and protecting wildlife, one of the best things about being a **Taronga Friend of the Future** is the annual Christmas event.

In keeping with the rest of 2020, last year's Friends of the Future Christmas celebration looked a bit different to usual.

Having 'Breakfast with the Seals' meant that we were able to celebrate the wonderful supporters who have

chosen to leave a gift in their Will to Taronga, in a COVID-safe way.

The stars of the show relished the early morning limelight, showing off the positive training techniques employed to enable Taronga's Marine Mammal keepers to carry out routine and diagnostic health procedures without stress to the animals.

Big boy, Murphy even came out for a walk,

getting up close and personal with our special guests; this is one of many enrichment activities the keepers use to keep our seals stimulated from day-to-day.

Everyone agreed it was worth the early start, especially those who took up the exclusive Friends of the Future offer at the Taronga Wildlife Retreat the night before the event.



## HEARTFELT THANKS *to the* FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS

We pay our respects and are deeply grateful to the following supporters who chose to leave a gift in their Will to Taronga.

These wonderful people are remembered for their love of animals and their legacy is forever in caring for wildlife and working towards a shared future for animals and people.

- The late Gretchen Dechert
- The late Helen Molesworth
- The late Stanley Johanson
- The late Susan Bateman
- The late David Bennett

# IN MEMORY *of* HELEN MOLESWORTH

We were saddened to farewell one of our long-standing Taronga supporters, Helen Molesworth, who passed away in December at the impressive age of 97.

Helen lived a very full and interesting life, and her legacy will live on at Taronga. Helen's support enabled us to build a special Sea Lion Breeding Facility, which was named in her honour, and which saw the pitter-patter (or pitter-splatter) of several sets of tiny flippers! Helen has also left a gift in her Will to Taronga - a very meaningful way to ensure your legacy can carry on well beyond your life-time.

We will miss Helen's sharp wit and huge smile (and her skill at naming animals – she once named



a Tasmanian Devil joey Mephistopheles!).

Taronga Chief Executive Cameron Kerr and some of the Taronga Team were honoured to join family and friends in farewelling Helen and reflecting on her colourful and wildlife-infused life.



## WHY I SUPPORT TARONGA

*“Ever since I was a young girl, I have been passionate about animals of all sorts.*

*In my adult years, as a biology teacher, I came to appreciate how important the survival of animal species and the welfare of animals all around the world truly is. Taronga's work, in partnership with so many other like-minded organisations, clearly demonstrates their commitment to do all they can to ensure the survival of species that find themselves on the brink of extinction.*

*I feel it a privilege, that by leaving a gift to the Taronga Foundation in my Will, I may one day be part of making this world a little better for all creatures that call it home.”*

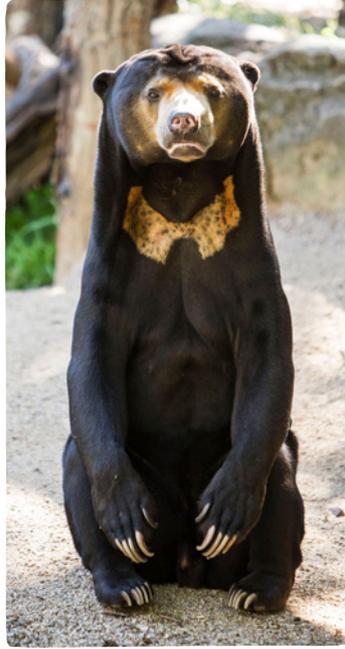
– Claudia Ford



## NEWS FROM THE ZOO

Taronga plays a leading role across various conservation projects working towards a shared future for wildlife and people.

We also care for some 5,000 species across both our zoos in Sydney and Dubbo. Here we share with you the latest updates from around the zoo.



### Farewell to our beloved Mr Hobbs

Sadly, in late January we had to say goodbye to one of Taronga's beloved residents Mr Hobbs, the Malayan Sun Bear.

He was a very sweet natured and charismatic bear who relished the company of his keepers.

Mr Hobbs was rescued by an expatriate business man and taken to the 'Free the Bears' sanctuary in Phonm Penh.



He was eventually relocated to Australia in 1997 where he lived a full rich life at Taronga, cared for deeply by a dedicated team of keepers.

A true ambassador for his threatened species, he will be deeply missed and leaves a meaningful and long-lasting legacy.

## BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

At Taronga we are happy to announce the arrival of the pitter patter of some tiny new paws! We were joined by:

**A cute little chimp** born to Naomi in October. The baby was born at 11am to the delight of watching guests!



A gorgeous tiny little **Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo joey!** The male joey, is about 4-5 months old but has only recently started popping his head and shoulders out of

mum Kwikila's pouch.

And last but not least we welcome the **cute and cuddly little Humphrey!**

Humphrey is an eight month old Koala joey born to mum Willow. He is the first-born joey at Taronga since the devastating bushfires that severely impacted the Koala population a year ago. His birth is invaluable to future of Koala populations.

**You can come and get a glimpse of Humphrey at Taronga today!**



## LET'S MEET...

...our new residents **Ras and Storm**



**A big welcome to two of our newest residents, Dromedary camels Ras and Storm.**

They arrived to Taronga Zoo Sydney from Dubbo in October. They have settled in well to their new home and are growing in confidence.

Storm is 19 years old, the darker of the two,

and Ras is 16 years old.

So far, we've learned that they like sitting on and rolling in sand, after which they love a good brushing!

**Come and welcome our newest residents.**

Book online at [www.taronga.org.au/buy-tickets](http://www.taronga.org.au/buy-tickets)

**Taronga Conservation Society Australia**

A Bradleys Head Road (PO Box 20), Mosman NSW 2088

T 1300 369 116 E [supporter@taronga.org.au](mailto:supporter@taronga.org.au) W [taronga.org.au](http://taronga.org.au)

ABN 41 733 619 876

**TARONGA**  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

*For the Wild*